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WASHINGTON, D. C.

THE MARKET BASKET

by

Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture

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WHEN YOU BLACK OUT

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"When you work out a blackout system for your home make use of materials you have on hand," suggests Bess Viemont Morrison, textile specialist of the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

"Best blackouts often cost the least. Look through attics, cellars, high closet shelves for usable materials now going to waste. Rushing out to buy yards of goods for blackout curtains is not only expensive--but the looms and machinery that it takes to produce that yardage are needed to meet military requirements."

Look the situation over first. Don't try to blackout the whole house. Select one room or two that are the safest. Then concentrate on these rooms and make them absolutely "light proof." Remember to cover glass doors and door panels as well as windows--and skylights, transoms, and ventilating shafts.

There's no one best way to achieve blackouts. You have to study the type of windows you have. Following are some possible ways that may be suitable, says Mrs. Morrison.

CURTAINS

Probably the most common method of blacking out is to use curtains.

LOOK AT YOUR PRESENT CURTAINS--The draperies you are using, or portieres and draperies you have consigned to the attic, may be suitable with a little

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alteration. They should cover the whole window and lap over well at the center.

If the draperies are of damask, velvet, brocade, or other heavy material and are lined--you need only to rip out the pinch pleats at the top and baste in a lightweight dark lining. This material may be sateen, percale, silesia--or good parts of old bed sheets dyed black. Finish off the top with rings to go over the present rod. Sew two rings to the outer edge on the underside to slip over small tacks at the side of the window casing to insure a snug fit at the side.

Unlined draperies may be treated the same way. But the lining you baste into them should be of heavier dark material--such as flannelette or canton flannel

SPECIAL CURTAINS--Take stock of the material you have rounded up. Any material will work that shuts out light. It should be dark--either black, dark blue, dark green, very dark brown, or the darkest red. If it is not one of these colors, dye it. Old bedspreads, old blankets, old quilts, old carpets, rugs, old sheets are some of the possible materials suggested for use by the Office of Production Management.

If you are able to choose, cottons are better than rayon because they have a certain fuzziness that rayons do not have. This helps to fill space between the yarns. Slightly napped materials and pile fabrics are better than thinner materials. It may take two thicknesses of a thin material to accomplish a satisfactory blackout.

Since blackout curtains are purely functional, there's no objection to having them made up of many pieces seamed together. The bottom hem need be only wide enough to keep the material from fraying--and the top hem just wide enough to slip over the rod if they are hung that way. Weights or extra rods in the

bottom hem help keep the curtain straight and taut and close to the window.

TO HANG CURTAINS--If possible, put the fixtures for the rods at the extreme upper and outer corners of the window frame.

Deeply recessed windows often present problems. If such a window has a wooden frame around it flush with the wall--the rod may be fixed on this frame so that the curtain comes out over the edge of the recess onto the wall at the side.

If the recessed window is fitted with a metal frame and there's no wood on which to put fittings, you'll need a special type of rod. You can use one made up of a solid rod that fits into rubber tipped sockets. This rod needs no nails or fastenings to hold it in the casing. Springs in each rubber socket take care of that. Curtains hung from such rods need to be long enough to extend above and below the window a few inches--and be full at the sides to fit close to the wall. For windows of this type, another kind of blackout often is better.

ALL CURTAINS--new or made over--should be four to six inches above the glass and at least six inches below the sill. Allow one and one half times the width of the window for fullness. A double curtain will be easier to manage on a wide window. But it should lap over and fasten securely in the center. There needs to be a generous overlap on both sides so no light can sneak through.

OTHER BLACKOUT POSSIBILITIES

BASEMENT RECREATION ROOM--This is sometimes almost ready for a blackout. Small basement windows may be painted black. Then if desired, regular curtains may be hung to hide the somber windows.

IF YOU HAVE A HANDY MAN HANDY--Use scraps of lumber on hand to make lightweight frames that fit snugly into windows. Cover frame with oilcloth, heavy dark

paper, or even two or three layers of old sheeting dyed black. These frames can be slipped into the window at night and fastened in place with turn buttons.

IF YOUR SHUTTERS REALLY WORK--Some types of shutters make a sufficient blackout when they are pulled shut and the shade and regular curtains cover the window from the inside. If light comes through the shutter, however, it may be covered on one side with some waterproof material--oilcloth or pieces of old canvas painted with a waterproof paint. Shutters with much openwork can be covered with a piece of light ply-wood or wall board and painted.

IF YOUR SHADES ARE DARK-COLORED--Either black or green shades will provide adequate blackout if they hang far enough out over the face of the window casing and are long enough to pull to the sill without tearing. Shade cloth needs to be closely woven and free from pin holes or torn places. Light-colored shades are of little blackout value. Dark shade cloth can be tacked on to present rollers--with the dark cloth next to the window. Or old shades may be painted with a flat black paint.

IF YOU USE PAINT in any of the ways suggested above--any paint that dries to a dull finish will work. A number of paint dealers recommend paint with a casein type base. This paint is easy to apply, dries quickly, goes a long way, doesn't get sticky near a radiator or stove, and spreads on most any surface.

DRESS REHEARSAL

Put in and test out your blackout equipment before the last minute. You may want to make some adjustments to keep a stray bit of light from coming through. And you may be able to work out easier ways of putting up the blackout arrangements on short notice.

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THE MARKET BASKET
by
Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture

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TEST YOURSELF
WITH DIET QUIZ

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Are you giving your family the food they need? Do you get your money's worth from every food dollar? Do you waste food? Are your cooking methods up-to-date? Does your family enjoy your meals?

The following quiz worked out by the Bureau of Home Economics of the U. S. Department of Agriculture will help you test yourself on these points. If you pass with colors flying, you're an A number 1 manager and are doing a lot to help out in a time of crisis by keeping your family healthy and happy.

DO YOU HAVE A PLAN?

1. Do you have a working knowledge of nutrition facts? That is, do you try to include in your meals every day at least the following:

MILK — 3/4 to 1 quart every day for a growing child; 1 quart for expectant or nursing mothers; 1 pint for everyone else. TOMATOES, ORANGES, GRAPEFRUIT, GREEN CABBAGE, RAW SALAD GREENS — 1 or more servings for everyone. LEAFY, GREEN OR YELLOW VEGETABLES — 1 or more servings. POTATOES, OTHER VEGETABLES, AND FRUITS — 2 servings or more a day. EGGS — 1 a day (or at least 3 or 4 a week.) LEAN MEAT, POULTRY, FISH — 1 or more servings a day. CEREALS — at least 2 servings of whole-grain products or "enriched" bread. FATS AND SWEETS — some butter or vitamin-A rich fat every day, and enough more fats and sweets to satisfy the appetite.

2. If you are on a limited food budget do you know ways to cut cost without cutting nutritive value? For instance, do you know how to use cheaper forms of milk, and the special value of potatoes, sweetpotatoes, whole-grain cereals, dry beans and peas, and peanuts?

3. If you live on a farm or in a small town and have some land--do you plan home food production to cut costs and get a better diet? Do you plan on a year-round basis--grow some extra in the summer to put up for winter?

DO YOU KNOW YOUR GROCERIES?

1. Do you shop on the basis of your weekly menu plans--buy staple foods in bulk when you save money that way?

2. Do you know when fruits and vegetables are "in season" and cheapest? Can you take advantage of food bargains by revising your menu plans to suit them?

3. Do you watch scales, read labels, look for Government grades, know your cuts of meat, recognize quality in most fresh vegetables and fruits?

4. Do you buy by weight or by quantity rather than by price?

5. Do you compare costs of food in different stores--check your purchases before you leave a store?

DOES YOUR COOKING SAVE FOOD VALUES?

1. Do you cook all protein foods--eggs, milk, meat, cheese, poultry, and fish--at low or moderate heat to keep the protein tender?

2. Do you cook meat according to cut--treating tender and less tender cuts differently?

3. Do you avoid overcooking of all foods?

4. Do you cook vegetables in as little water as possible, as quickly as possible, and use all cooking water in sauces, gravies, if you can't serve it with the vegetable? Do you leave the lid off the pan while green vegetables are cooking and never add soda?

5. Do you combine your leftovers into appetizing new dishes?

6. Do you save bacon fat and meat drippings to add flavor to other foods?

7. Do you avoid thick peelings?

8. Do you start the cooking of frozen fruits and vegetables before they thaw out--or if you eat them raw serve them immediately when they are thawed?

9. Do you avoid failures and food wastes by careful measuring, heat control, and scientific cooking methods?

DO THEY EAT IT?

1. Do you serve food attractively?

2. Do you have variety--of food, of color, of texture, of flavor?

3. Are your sauces and gravies free from lumps--your hot foods hot--your cold foods cold?

4. Does your family have fun at the table and talk about things more interesting than what's wrong with the food?

5. Finally, the acid test--do they ask for second helpings?

HOW DO YOU SCORE?

This quiz is really four separate quizzes and should be scored that way. Grade yourself by the number of times you could answer an unqualified "yes". If you answered yes to practically all--KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK. If you answered yes to over half--YOU'RE ON THE RIGHT TRACT, ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT. If you answered yes to less than half--DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT.

It is quite likely that you may have scored high on one of the quizzes, very low on another. Your score will give you an idea of the places you can improve.

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THE MARKET BASKET

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Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture

CARE CONSERVES
CLEANING AIDS

Right now, there's no question about whether strategic materials can do more good in vacuum cleaners and other household equipment--or in guns, tanks, planes, and ships. Which means that many such articles on hand now are going to have to endure "for the duration."

"Fortunately, when it comes to conserving most household equipment, patriotism and good housekeeping march hand in hand," says Lenore Sater, chief of the Housing and Household Equipment section of the U. S. Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Home Economics.

"For instance," points out Miss Sater, "intelligent care of cleaning equipment means not only increased length of service but more efficient cleaning as well. And when you clean efficiently you save your time, your energy, and your household furnishings as well as your tools."

In the following paragraphs, Miss Sater illustrates her foregoing remark with some tips on conserving vacuum cleaners and carpet sweepers.

GET ACQUAINTED WITH YOUR VACUUM CLEANER

Find out first of all what makes your vacuum cleaner "tick." Read the directions that came with it if you can find them. Turn the cleaner upside down and look at the nozzle and the nozzle parts. By examining them closely you can tell whether your cleaner is the type that cleans by suction alone--or if it has

a sweeping and beating action as well. The type of the vacuum cleaner makes a difference in the way you care for it.

If your vacuum cleaner is what is known as the "suction" type it will have no movable parts inside the nozzle. The nozzle, of course, is the part of the cleaner that contacts the rug. Since all the cleaning is done by suction it is most important that the nozzle at all times makes a close seal with the rug.

If your vacuum cleaner does not depend on suction alone for cleaning it will have inside of the nozzle some kind of rotating part that sweeps and beats the rug. This part may be a brush that goes round and round--or it may be a cylinder that rotates and has attached to it both brushes and rubber vibrators--or it may be a cylinder that combines a smooth metal beater bar and brushes. In these cleaners, while having the right adjustment of the nozzle is important, it is even more important that the rotating parts are kept in good order. In this type of cleaner, the suction as a rule is not as high as in the straight suction cleaner - and if the beating and sweeping action decrease, the cleaning ability of the cleaner is impaired.

HOW TO ADJUST THE NOZZLE

If your cleaner has an adjustable nozzle and if your rugs are of different thicknesses you may have to adjust the nozzle from room to room to get effective cleaning. You can adjust the nozzle in the following way with the aid of a quarter or a half dollar.

If your clearner is of the upright suction type hold the handle as you do when you clean. Then raise the nozzle until a quarter slides under easily. For other types of cleaners, raise it a little higher--until a half dollar slides under easily. Start the motor to test the nozzle height. The carpet should pull up against the botton of the cleaner.

Some nozzles adjust automatically; some you adjust by stepping on a pedal; some you can adjust by hand by a small screw at the side of the nozzle.

WATCH THE BRUSHES

Keep all brushes free from hair and threads. Be sure brushes on rotating parts inside the nozzle extend slightly below the lips of the nozzle. They wear down in time and need to be lowered. You can lower some of them by a screw, lever, or a pin located at the end of each brush roll, while others require the attention of a service man. When you can't lower it the proper amount any longer, you need to get a new brush.

Here's how to judge how far the brush should extend over the lips of the nozzle: Turn the machine upside down and place a stiff piece of cardboard across the opening in the bottom. The bristle tufts should come just above the edge of the card.

KEEP THE DIRT CONTAINER CLEAN

No matter how hard the motor and the fan of the cleaner work, a good cleaning job can't be done unless the dirt container is emptied at least once a week—and oftener if you do an extra lot of cleaning. In most vacuum cleaners the bag itself acts as a filter and catches the dirt. In other types a separate filter and dirt container are provided. Both should be kept clean.

If the dirt container is the bag, take it out and empty it—and occasionally brush it gently but thoroughly. Some manufacturers advise that bags be dry cleaned twice a year. If the dirt container is a pan of water, throw out the water, wash the container and dry it thoroughly.

Keeping the container clean makes for a stronger suction and hence better cleaning.

CLEAN AND OIL FROM TIME TO TIME

The motor needs to be cleaned and oiled according to the manufacturer's

directions. On some this can be done at home. Others need to be sent to an expert. If you have any doubts about it, call a repair man. All cleaners should be checked occasionally by a factory representative. So if yours hasn't been checked recently, now's a good time to have that done.

Whatever you do—don't use too much oil.

WHEN YOU USE THE CLEANER

Pick up pins, nails, coins, and any other metal objects before you run the cleaner over the rug. These can nick the fan and throw it off balance and also nick the belt of the motor-driven vacuum cleaners.

Use a wall plug for a vacuum—don't plug it into the light socket. Pull the plug—not the cord—when you disconnect the cleaner.

When you put the cleaner away, wrap the cord loosely around the hooks provided for that purpose. Never wrap the cord tightly or you may break wires and damage the covering. Avoid kinking, twisting, straining the cord. And don't step on the cord or push the cleaner over it.

CARPET SWEEPERS

Compared to vacuum cleaners, carpet sweepers are simple mechanisms—and simpler to care for.

Empty the pan after each use. Remove hair and ravelings by clipping with scissors first. Then you can pull them out without injuring the brush. Wipe the brush once in a while with a dry cleaning fluid to take off oil and wax.

Oil the sweeper once each month. When you're not using it, let it stand on its side or hang by its handle.

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